

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ACDA-19

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 OIC-04 AEC-11 OMB-01 IO-14 H-03 SS-20 NSC-10

DRC-01 AECE-00 /164 W

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P R 131523Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 559

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENNA 9379

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET DELEGATE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING DINNER NOV 12 HOSTED BY SOVIET REP KHLESTOV, LATTER RESTATED SOVIET DESIRE TO MOVE AHEAD PROMPTLY TO SPECIFIC NEGOTIATION ON FORCE REDUCTIONS. HE REVIEWED ARGUMENTS FOR EAST'S POSITION AND CRITICIZED WEST'S POSITION. HE IMPLIED SOVIETS MIGHT LEAK THEIR NOV 8 PROPOSAL IF NEGOTIATIONS DID NOT MOVE AHEAD PROMPTLY. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING DINNER KHLESTOV RAISED SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS BY ASKING US REP FOR HIS ESTIMATE OF WHEN THEY WOULD END WITH A PRACTICAL OUTCOME. USREP REPLIED THAT ONE COULD TELL BETTER BY CHRISTMAS. KHLESTOV STATED THAT CURRENT DISCUSSION OF GENERAL CONCEPTS BY
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WESTERN REPS WAS NOT PRODUCTIVE AND WOULD RESULT IN UNPROFITABLE

ARGUMENT ON SUBJECTS ON WHICH THE TWO SIDES HAD IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCE. AS AN EXAMPLE HE SAID THAT WEST ASSERTS DISPARITIES BUT CONVENIENTLY OMITTS DISPARITIES WHICH FAVOR THE WEST, NAMELY THOSE IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND AIR FORCES, PARTICULARLY NUCLEAR CAPABLE. SOVREP STRESSED THAT SOVIETS WISHED TO REACH COMPROMISE

AND THAT THIS COULD BE FACILITATED BY MOVING TO DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. HE ASKED WHEN WEST WOULD MAKE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL OR ADDRESS SOVIET PROPOSAL. USREP SAID THAT WEST WOULD COMMENCE ON FOLLOWING DAY (NOVEMBER 13) TO MAKE GENERAL PROPOSALS AND WOULD PROGRESSIVELY MAKE THEM MORE SPECIFIC. HE ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT WEST WOULD SOON MAKE COMPREHENSIVE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL.

3. KHLESTOVE SAID THAT SOME PEOPLE IN WARSAW PACT WERE NOT ADVOCATING

MAKING THEIR PROPOSAL PUBLIC IF WEST DID NOT BEGIN TO DISCUSS EASTERN PROPOSAL OR AT LEAST SPECIFIC WESTERN PROPOSAL. HE SAID THAT HE DISAGREED WITH THESE VIEWS AND BELIEVED IT WOULD BE MORE PRODUCTIVE TO NEGOTIATE IN CONFIDENTIAL ATMOSPHERE. HE ADDED THAT THERE WERE OF COURSE MANY WAYS TO LEAK THEIR PROPOSAL TO THE PRESS. USREP REPLIED THAT HE AGREED WITH THE CONCEPT OF CONFIDENTIAL NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT THE WEST HAD CAUTIONED ITS PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY.

HE POINTED OUT THERE HAD BEEN NO LEAK TO DATE OF THEIR PROPOSAL.

4. SOVREP GAVE HIS VIEW THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BREAK FOR CHRISTMAS SO THAT THE DELEGATIONS COULD SEE THEIR FAMILIES. USREP SAID THAT, AS PERSONAL VIEW, HE AGREED, BUT THAT THE BREAK SHOULD NOT BE FOR TOO LONG SO THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS COULD CONTINUE ON A BUSINESSLIKE BASIS.

5. SOVREP SAID THAT THE EAST HAD PROPOSED A SIMPLE SOLUTION TO A COMPLEX SUBJECT BECAUSE IT WAS IMPORTANT TO SHOW THAT AGREEMENT ON REDUCTIONS COULD BE REACHED IN ORDER TO CONVINCE SKEPTICS. FOR THIS REASON A SMALL FIRST STEP MIGHT BE ADVISABLE. USREP COMMENTED THAT FIRST STEP SHOULD BE OF SIGNIFICANT SIZE SO AS NOT TO APPEAR A MERE TOKEN AND IN ORDER TO BUILD CONFIDENCE.

6. SOVREP ASKED WHETHER IT WAS TRUE THAT THE WEST WOULD PROPOSE AN EQUAL PERCENTAGE CUT ALSO. USREP REPLIED THAT WEST WOULD MAKE SECRET

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ITS POSITION CLEAR GRADUALLY STARTING TOMORROW AND THAT ITS POSITION WOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY ELABORATED SOON.

7. USREP ASKED WHAT WAS THE BASE FIGURE TO WHICH THE 50/0 WOULD BE APPLIED. SOVREP REPLIED THAT BOTH SIDES HAD MEANS TO DETERMINE AND KNEW THE FIGURES. USREP REPLIED THAT THE BASE FIGURE WAS A MISSING ELEMENT IN THE SOVIET PROPOSAL. SOVREP INDICATED HE UNDERSTOOD AND IMPLIED THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT LATE GIVE A FIGURE.

8. US REP ASKED SOVREP HIS VIEWS ON WEST'S PROPOSAL THAT THERE BE A COMMON CEILING ON GROUND FORCES. SOVREP SAID THAT THEIR MILITARY EXPERTS WERE OF THE VIEW THAT THE PARTIES SHOULD CONSIDER THE TOTAL MILITARY CAPACITY ON EACH SIDE AND THAT THIS WAS BALANCED. HE ASSERTED THAT EACH SIDE DESIGNS ITS OWN FORCES AS IT CONSIDERS BEST. THE WEST HAD DEVELOPED NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES FIRST AND ELECTED TO RELY ON TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS WHICH BALANCED THE EAST'S FORCE CAPABILITIES. US REP STATED THAT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITIES BECAUSE THE GROUND FORCES ARE THE HEART OF THE CONFRONTATION AND THAT REDUCTIONS IN GROUND FORCES WOULD MAKE THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVED STABILITY.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENNA 9379

FROM US REP MBFR

9. SOVREP ARGUED THAT REDUCTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE NATIONAL FORCES; THAT THE GDR AND THE POLES WISHED TO BE INCLUDED AND WISHED TO HAVE

THE FRG INCLUDED. HE ADDED THAT THE SOVIETS WISHED TO HAVE THE FRG INCLUDED SINCE THEY REMEMBERED GERMAN MILITARY CAPABILITIES. HE ALSO ADDED THAT THE GDR WISHED TO BE INCLUDED SO THAT IT COULD ACHIEVE THE BUDGETARY SAVINGS INVOLVED IN FORCE REDUCTIONS. HE ASKED WHY THE WEST OMITTED THE FRG AND THE UK FROM ITS PROPOSED REDUCTION. HE ASSERTED THAT THE FRG AND THE OTHER WESTERN ALLIES (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE UK) WISHED TO REDUCE THEIR FORCES.

10. USREP REPLIED THAT THE SOVIETS AND THE US HAD A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP. THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD IN AGREEMENTS ALREADY REACHED RECOGNIZED THEIR SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISKS OF WAR. HE ADDED THAT REDUCTION OF FORCES OF THE OTHER PARTIES COULD BE AGREED TO IN A SECRET

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SECOND PHASE AND THAT THE FRG WAS IN AGREEMENT THAT THE FIRST PHASE SHOULD BE LIMITED TO US-SOVIET REDUCTIONS.

11. SOVREP ASKED WHY THE WEST WISHED TO OMIT THE AIR FORCES FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE AIR FORCE ACTS AS A TEAM WITH THE GROUND FORCES AND CITED THE EXAMPLES OF VIET-NAM AND KOREA. USREP REPLIED THAT THE AIR FORCES WERE ONLY SUPPORTIVE TO THE GROUND FORCES AND THAT IT WAS THE GROUND FORCES ALONE WHICH CAN TAKE AND HOLD GROUND. HE ADDED THAT AIR FORCES WITHDRAWN COULD BE RETURNED QUICKLY. SOVREP REPLIED THAT THE RECENT MIDEAST AIRLIFTS HAD SHOWN THE CAPACITY OF BOTH SIDES TO FLY IN HEAVY EQUIPMENT IN LARGE QUANTITIES. USREP POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DIFFICULT TO RETURN GROUND FORCES AND THEIR EQUIPMENT THAN TO RETURN AIR FORCES.

12. USREP ADDED THAT INCLUSION OF AIR FORCES IN NEGOTIATIONS WOULD UNNECESSARILY COMPLICATE NEGOTIATIONS; THAT RELATIVE COMBAT CAPABILITIES OF RIVAL AIR FORCES WERE HARD TO MEASURE AND REFERRED AGAIN TO THE EASR OF RETURN OF AIR FORCES. SOVREP ASSERTED THAT THE PARTIES WOULD NOT ENTER INTO A REDUCTION AGREEMENT UNLESS THEY PLANNED TO ADHERE TO IT. USREP REPLIED THAT THE INTENTIONS OF THE PRESENT SOVIET GOVERNMENT MAY BE TO ADHERE TO ANY AGREEMENT BUT THAT INTENTIONS CAN CHANGE QUICKLY AND ACCORDINGLY THE WEST MUST BASE ITS JUDGMENTS AND ANY REDUCTION AGREEMENT ON CAPABILITIES RATHER THAN INTENTIONS.

13. SOVREP IN REFERRING TO WEST'S MENTION OF DISPARITIES OMITTED ANY REFERENCE TO GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITY. USREP REMINDED HIM THAT THIS WAS A CRITICAL DISPARITY AND THAT EQUAL PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS WOULD NOT HAVE EQUAL IMPACT ON EACH SIDE'S SECURITY IF THE SOVIETS WITHDREW ONLY 650 KILOMETERS WHEREAS THE US WITHDREW 5,000.

14. IN SEPARATE DISCUSSION BETWEEN USDEPREP AND SOVIET DELEGATE MEMBER KVITSINSKY, LATTER PUSHED HARD FOR INCLUSION OF AIR FORCES AND COVERAGE OF DUNDESWEHR, "INCLUDING GERMAN RESERVES - ALL OTHER

RESERVE FORCES CAN BE OMITTED." KVITSINSKY ARGUED THAT IT
SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO REACH AGREEMENT WITHIN FOUR MONTHS,
SAID HE WAS GOING TO RETURN TO MOSCOW IF ALLIES DID NOT
DEMONSTRATE MORE BUSINESSLIKE ATTITUDE AND THEN PLUGGED FOR A
CHRISTMAS RECESS.HUMES

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